

Action Verb or Linking Verb?

When you're trying to figure out whether a complement is a **direct object**, **indirect object**, **object complement**, **predicate nominative**, or **predicate adjective**, you must first figure out whether the verb is an **ACTION VERB** or a **LINKING VERB**.

Remember:

- An action verb shows some type of action the subject is performing.
- A linking verb has no action. It connects the subject to another word that either renames it (predicate nominative) or describes it (predicate adjective).

List of Commonly Used Linking Verbs

be	shall be	should be
being	will be	would be
am	has been	can be
is	have been	could be
are	had been	should have been
was	shall have been	would have been
were	will have been	could have been

Other Common Linking Verbs

appear	smell
become	sound
feel	stay
grow	taste
look	
remain	
seem	

NOTE: Sometimes these verbs (especially the “Other Common Linking Verbs”) aren’t used as linking verbs. To be linking verbs they must be linking the subject of the sentence to another word after the verb that either renames the subject (predicate nominative) or describes the subject (predicate adjective). The sentences below show a few of the “Other Common Linking Verbs” used first as a linking verb and then as an action verb.

Sarah ^{LV}appeared tired after she ran the Boston Marathon.
Prince ^{AV}appeared at the concert two hours late.

I ^{LV}grew tired waiting for my aunt’s plane to arrive.
I ^{AV}grew three inches over the summer.

He ^{LV}remained calm when the earthquake hit.
He ^{AV}remained in the building when the earthquake hit.

John ^{LV}looked refreshed after taking a shower.
John ^{AV}looked for his missing contact lense.

EXERCISE - For each sentence, find and underline the subject once, underline the verb twice, and decide whether the verb is an action verb or a linking verb (check the correct column).

Action Verb or Linking Verb?

1. John is planning a party after graduation.
2. He is much taller than his brother.
3. The leftovers tasted spoiled at the end of the party.
4. We looked everywhere for the missing watch.
5. Who can remember the seventh president of the United States?
6. He should have been our class representative.
7. You can be anything in this whole wide world.
8. Fred should be trying much harder in his physics class.
9. Did you stay for the entire game Friday night?
10. The lone survivor grew weak after the tragic accident.

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Now go back and see if you can find the complements in each sentence.